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CANADA'S EL DORADO.

BY JULIAN RALPH.



HERE is on this continent a territory of imperial extent which is one of the Canadian sisterhood of states, and yet of which small account has been taken by those who discuss either the most advantageous relations of trade or that closer intimacy so often referred to as a possibility in the future of our country and its northern neighbor. Although British Columbia is advancing in rank among the provinces of the Dominion by reason of its abundant natural resources, it is not remarkable

that we read and hear little concerning it. The people in it are few, and the knowledge of it is even less in proportion. It is but partially explored, and for what can be learned of it one must catch up information piecemeal from blue-books, the pamphlets of scientists, from tales of adventure, and from the less trustworthy literature composed to attract travellers and settlers.

It would severely strain the slender

facts to make a sizable pamphlet of the history of British Columbia. A wandering and imaginative Greek called Juan de Fuca told his people that he had discovered a passage from ocean to ocean between this continent and a great island in the Pacific. Sent there to seize and fortify it, he disappeared—at least from history. This was about 1592. In 1778 Captain Cook roughly surveyed the coast, and in 1792 Captain Vancouver, who as a boy had been with Cook on two voyages, examined the sound between the island and the mainland with great care, hoping to find that it led to the main water system of the interior. He gave to the strait at the entrance the nickname of the Greek, and in the following year received the transfer of authority over the country from the Spanish commissioner Bodega of Quadra, then established there. The two put aside false modesty, and named the great island "the Island of Vancouver and Quadra." At the time the English sailor was there it chanced that he met that hardy old homespun baronet Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who was the first man to cross the continent, making the astonishing journey in a canoe manned by Iroquois Indians. The mainland became known as New Caledonia. It took its present name from the Columbia River, and that, in turn, got its name from the ship *Columbia*, of Boston, Captain Gray, which entered its mouth in 1792, long after the Spaniards had known the stream and called it the Oregon. The rest is quickly told. The region passed into the hands of the fur-traders. Vancouver Island became a crown colony in 1849, and British Columbia followed in 1858.

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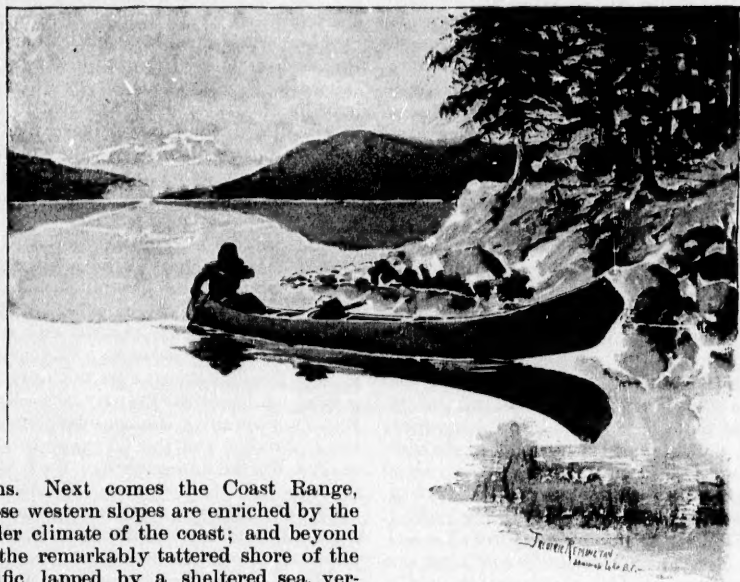
They were united in 1866, and joined the Canadian confederation in 1871. Three years later the province exceeded both Manitoba and Prince Edward Island in the value of its exports, and also showed an excess of exports over imports. It has a Lieutenant-Governor and Legislative Assembly, and is represented at Ottawa in accordance with the Canadian system. Its people have been more closely related to ours in business than those of any other province, and they entertain a warmly friendly feeling toward "the States." In the larger cities the Fourth of July is informally but generally observed as a holiday.

British Columbia is of immense size. It is as extensive as the combination of New England, the Middle States and Maryland, the Virginias, the Carolinas, and Georgia, leaving Delaware out. It is larger than Texas, Colorado, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire joined together. Yet it has been all but overlooked by man, and may be said to be an empire with only one wagon road, and that is but a blind artery halting in the middle of the country. But whoever follows this necessarily incomplete survey of what man has found that region to be, and of what his yet puny hands have drawn from it, will dismiss the popular and natural suspicion that it is a wilderness worthy of its present fate. Until the whole globe is banded with steel rails and yields to the plough, we will continue to regard whatever region lies beyond our doors as waste-land, and to fancy that every line of latitude has its own unvarying climatic characteristics. There is an opulent civilization in what we once were taught was "the Great American Desert," and far up at Edmonton, on the Peace River, farming flourishes despite the fact that it is where our school-books located a zone of perpetual snow. Farther along we shall study a country crossed by the same parallels of latitude that dissect inhospitable Labrador, and we shall discover that as great a difference exists between the two shores of the continent on that zone as that which distinguishes California from Massachusetts. Upon the coast of this neglected corner of the world we shall see that a climate like that of England is produced, as England's is, by a warm current in the sea; in the southern half of the interior we shall discover valleys as inviting as those in our

New England; and far north, at Port Simpson, just below the down-reaching claw of our Alaska, we shall find such a climate as Halifax enjoys.

British Columbia has a length of eight hundred miles, and averages four hundred miles in width. To whoever crosses the country it seems the scene of a vast earth-disturbance, over which mountains are scattered without system. In fact, however, the Cordillera belt is there divided into four ranges, the Rockies forming the eastern boundary, then the Gold Range, then the Coast Range, and, last of all, that partially submerged chain whose upraised parts form Vancouver and the other mountainous islands near the mainland in the Pacific. A vast valley flanks the southwestern side of the Rocky Mountains, accompanying them from where they leave our Northwestern States in a wide straight furrow for a distance of seven hundred miles. Such great rivers as the Columbia, the Fraser, the Parsnip, the Kootenay, and the Finlay are encountered in it. While it has a lesser agricultural value than other valleys in the province, its mineral possibilities are considered to be very great, and when, as must be the case, it is made the route of communication between one end of the territory and the other, a vast timber supply will be rendered marketable.

The Gold Range, next to the westward, is not bald, like the Rockies, but, excepting the higher peaks, is timbered with a dense forest growth. Those busiest of all British Columbian explorers, the "prospectors," have found much of this system too difficult even for their pertinacity. But the character of the region is well understood. Here are high plateaus of rolling country, and in the mountains are glaciers and snow fields. Between this system and the Coast Range is what is called the Interior Plateau, averaging one hundred miles in width, and following the trend of that portion of the continent, with an elevation that grows less as the north is approached. This plateau is crossed and followed by valleys that take every direction, and these are the seats of rivers and watercourses. In the southern part of this plateau is the best grazing land in the province, and much fine agricultural country, while in the north, where the climate is more moist, the timber increases, and parts of the land are thought to be convertible into



AN IMPRESSION OF THE SHUSWAP LAKE,
BRITISH COLUMBIA.

farms. Next comes the Coast Range, whose western slopes are enriched by the milder climate of the coast; and beyond lies the remarkably tattered shore of the Pacific, lapped by a sheltered sea, verdant, indented by numberless inlets, which, in turn, are faced by uncounted islands, and receive the discharge of almost as many streams and rivers—a wondrously beautiful region, forested by giant trees, and resorted to by numbers of fish exceeding calculation and belief. Beyond the coast is the bold chain of mountains of which Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands are parts. Here is a vast treasure in that coal which our naval experts have found to be the best on the Pacific coast, and here also are traces of metals, whose value industry has not yet established.

It is a question whether this vast territory has yet 100,000 white inhabitants. Of Indians it has but 20,000, and of Chinese about 9000. It is a vast land of silence, a huge tract slowly changing from the field and pleasure-ground of the fur-trader and sportsman to the quarry of the miner. The Canadian Pacific Railway crosses it, revealing to the immigrant and the globe-trotter an unceasing panorama of grand, wild, and beautiful scenery unequalled on this continent. During a few hours the traveller sees, across the majestic cañon of the Fraser, the neglected remains of the old Cariboo stage road, built under pressure of the gold craze. It demonstrated surprising energy in the

baby colony, for it connected Yale, at the head of short steam navigation on the Fraser, with Barkerville, in the distant Cariboo country, 400 miles away, and it cost half a million dollars. The traveller sees here and there an Indian village or a "mission," and now and then a tiny town; but for the most part his eye scans only the primeval forest, lofty mountains, valleys covered with trees as beasts are with fur, cascades, turbulent streams, and huge sheltered lakes. Except at the stations, he sees few men. Now he notes a group of Chinamen at work on the railway; anon he sees an Indian upon a clumsy perch and searching the Fraser for salmon, or in a canoe paddling toward the gorgeous sunset that confronts the daily west-bound train as it rolls by great Shuswap Lake.

But were the same traveller out of the train, and gifted with the power to make himself ubiquitous, he would still be, for the most part, lonely. Down in the smiling bunch-grass valleys in the south he would see here and there the outfit of a farmer or the herds of a cattle-man. A

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burst of noise would astonish him near by, in the Kootenay country, where the new silver mines are being worked, where claims have been taken up by the thousand, and whither a railroad is hastening. Here and there, at points out of sight one from another, he would hear the crash of a lumberman's axe, the report of a hunter's rifle, or the crackle of an Indian's fire. On the Fraser he would find a little town called Yale, and on the coast the streets and ambitious buildings and busy wharves of Vancouver would astonish him. Victoria, across the strait, a town of larger size and remarkable beauty, would give him company, and near Vancouver and Victoria the little cities of New Westminster and Nanaimo (lumber and coal ports respectively) would rise before him. There, close together, he would see more than half the population of the province.

Fancy his isolation as he looked around him in the northern half of the territory, where a few trails lead to fewer posts of the Hudson Bay Company, where the endless forests and multitudinous lakes and streams are cut by but infrequent paddles in the hands of a race that has lost one-third its numerical strength in the last ten years, where the only true homes are within the palisades or the unguarded log cabin of the fur-trading agents, and where the only other white men are either washing sand in the river bars, driving the stages of the only line that penetrates a piece of the country, or are those queer devil-may-care but companionable Davy Crocketts of the day who are guides now and then, hunters half the time, placer-miners when they please, and whatever else there is a call for betweentimes!

A very strange sight that my supposititious traveller would pause long to look at would be the herds of wild horses that defy the Queen, her laws, and her subjects in the Lillooet Valley. There are thousands of them there, and over in the Nicola and Chilcotin country, on either side of the Fraser, north of Washington State. They were originally of good stock, but now they not only defy capture, but eat valuable grass, and spoil every horse turned out to graze. The newspapers aver that the government must soon be called upon to devise means for ridding the valleys of this nuisance. This is one of those sections which promise well for future stock-raising and agricultural operations. There are plenty such. The Nicola Val-

ley has been settled twenty years, and there are many cattle there, on numerous ranches. It is good land, but rather high for grain, and needs irrigation. The snow-fall varies greatly in all these valleys, but in ordinary winters horses and cattle manage well with four to six weeks' feeding. On the upper Kootenay, a valley eight to ten miles wide, ranching began a quarter of a century ago, during the gold excitement. The "cow-men" raise grain for themselves there. This valley is 3000 feet high. The Okanagon Valley is lower, and is only from two to five miles wide, but both are of similar character, of very great length, and are crossed and intersected by branch valleys. The greater part of the Okanagon does not need irrigating. A beautiful country is the Kettle River region, along the boundary between the Columbia and the Okanagon. It is narrow, but flat and smooth on the bottom, and the land is very fine. Bunch-grass covers the hills around it for a distance of from 400 to 500 feet, and there timber begins. It is only in occasional years that the Kettle River Valley needs water. In the Spallumcheen Valley one farmer had 500 acres in grain last summer, and the most modern agricultural machinery is in use there. These are mere notes of a few among almost innumerable valleys that are clothed with bunch-grass, and that often possess the characteristics of beautiful parks. In many, wheat can be and is raised, possibly in most of them. I have notes of the successful growth of peaches, and of the growth of almond-trees to a height of fourteen feet in four years, both in the Okanagon country.

The shooting in these valleys is most alluring to those who are fond of the sport. Caribou, deer, bear, prairie-chicken, and partridges abound in them. In all probability there is no similar extent of country that equals the valley of the Columbia, from which, in the winter of 1888, between six and eight tons of deer-skins were shipped by local traders, the result of legitimate hunting. But the forests and mountains are as they were when the white man first saw them, and though the beaver and sea-otter, the marten, and those foxes whose furs are coveted by the rich, are not as abundant as they once were, the rest of the game is most plentiful. On the Rockies and on the Coast Range the mountain-goat, most difficult of beasts to hunt, and still harder to get,

is abundant yet. The "big-horn," or mountain-sheep, is not so common, but the hunting thereof is usually successful if good guides are obtained. The cougar, the grizzly, and the lynx are all plentiful, and black and brown bears are very numerous. Elk are going the way of the "big-horn" — are preceding that creature, in fact. Pheasants (imported), grouse, quail, and water-fowl are among the feathered game, and the river and lake fishing is such as is not approached in any other part of the Dominion. The province is a sportsman's Eden, but the hunting of big game there is not a venture to be lightly undertaken. It is not alone the distance or the cost that gives one pause, for, after the province is reached, the mountain-climbing is a task that no amount of wealth will lighten. And these are genuine mountains, by-the-way, wearing eternal caps of snow, and equally eternal deceit as to their distances, their heights, and as to all else concerning which a rarefied atmosphere can hocus-pocus a stranger. There is one animal, king of all the beasts, which the most unaspiring hunter may chance upon as well as the bravest, and that animal carries a perpetual chip upon its shoulder, and seldom turns from an encounter. It is the grizzly bear. It is his presence that gives you either zest or pause, as you may decide, in hunting all the others that roam the mountains. Yet, in that hunter's dream-land it is the grizzly that attracts many sportsmen every year.

From the headquarters of the Hudson Bay Company in Victoria I obtained the list of animals in whose skins that company trades at that station. It makes a formidable catalogue of zoological products, and is as follows: Bears (brown, black, grizzly), beaver, badger, foxes (silver, cross, and red), fishers, martens, minks, lynxes, musk-rat, otter (sea or land), panther, raccoon, wolves (black, gray, and coyote), black-tailed deer, stags (a true stag, growing to the size of an ox, and found on the hills of Vancouver Island), caribou or reindeer, hares, mountain-goat, big-horn (or mountain-sheep), moose (near the Rockies), wood-buffalo (found in the north, not greatly different from the bison, but larger), geese, swans, and duck.

The British Columbian Indians are of such unprepossessing appearance that one hears with comparative equanimity of

their numbering only 20,000 in all, and of their rapid shrinkage, owing principally to the vices of their women. They are, for the most part, canoe Indians, in the interior as well as on the coast, and they are (as one might suppose a nation of tailors would become) short-legged, and with those limbs small and inclined to bow. On the other hand, their exercise with the paddle has given them a disproportionate development of their shoulders and chests,

so that, being too large above and too small below, their appearance is very peculiar. They are fish-eaters the year around; and though some, like the Hydahs upon the coast, have been warlike and turbulent, such is not the reputation of those in the interior. It was the meat-eating Indian who made war a vocation and self-torture a dissipation. The fish-eating Indian kept out of his way. These short squat British Columbian natives are very dark-skinned, and have physiognomies so different from those of the Indians east of the Rockies that the study of their faces has tempted the ethnologists into extraordinary guessing upon their origin, and into a contention which I prefer to avoid. It is not guessing to say that their high cheek-bones and flat faces make them resemble the Chinese. That is true to such a degree that in walking the streets of Victoria, and meeting alternate Chinamen and Siwash, it is not always easy to say which is which, unless one proceeds upon the assumption that if a man looks clean he is apt to be a Chinaman, whereas if he is dirty and ragged he is most likely to be a Siwash.

You will find that seven in ten among the more intelligent British Columbians conclude these Indians to be of Japanese origin. The Japanese current is neighborly to the province, and it has drifted Japanese junks to these shores. When the first traders visited the neighborhood of the mouth of the Columbia they found



THE TSCHUMUM, OR TOOL USED IN MAKING CANOES.

beeswax in the sand near the vestiges of a wreck, and it is said that one wreck of a junk was met with, and 12,000 pounds of this wax was found on her. Whalers are said to have frequently encountered wrecked and drifting junks in the eastern Pacific, and a local legend has it that in 1834 remnants of a junk with three Japanese and a cargo of pottery were found on the coast south of Cape Flattery. Nothing less than all this should excuse even a rudderless ethnologist for so cruel a reflection upon the Japanese, for these Indians are so far from pretty that all who see them agree with Captain Butler, the traveller, who wrote that "if they are of the Mongolian type, the sooner the Mongolians change their type the better."

The coast Indians are splendid sailors, and their dugouts do not always come off second best in racing with the boats of white men. With a primitive yet ingeniously made tool, like an adze, in the construction of which a blade is tied fast to a bent handle of bone, these natives laboriously pick out the heart of a great cedar log, and shape its outer sides into the form of a boat. When the log is properly hollowed, they fill it with water, and then drop in stones which they have heated in a fire. Thus they steam the boat so that they may spread the sides and fit in the crossbars which keep it strong and preserve its shape. These dugouts are sometimes sixty feet long, and are used for whaling and long voyages in rough seas. They are capable of carrying tons of the salmon or oolachan or herring, of which these people, who live as their fathers did, catch sufficient in a few days for their maintenance throughout a whole year. One gets an idea of the swarms of fish that infest those waters by the knowledge that before nets were used the herring and the oolachan, or candle-fish, were swept into these boats by an implement formed by studding a ten-foot pole with spikes or nails. This was swept among the fish in the water, and the boats were speedily filled with the creatures that were impaled upon the spikes. Salmon, sea-otter, otter, beaver, marten, bear, and deer (or caribou or moose) were and still are the chief resources of most of the Indians. Once they sold the fish and the peltry to the Hudson Bay Company, and ate what parts or surplus they did not sell. Now they work in the canneries or fish for them in summer, and hunt, trap, or

loaf the rest of the time. However, while they still fish and sell furs, and while some are yet as their fathers were, nearly all the coast Indians are semi-civilized. They have at least the white man's clothes and hymns and vices. They have churches; they live in houses; they work in canneries. What little there was that was picturesque about them has vanished only a few degrees faster than their own extinction as a pure race, and they are now a lot of longshoremen. What Mr. Duncan did for them in Metlakahla—especially in housing the families separately—has not been arrived at even in the reservation at Victoria, where one may still see one of the huge low shed-like houses they prefer, ornamented with totem poles, and arranged for eight families, and consequently for a laxity of morals for which no one can hold the white man responsible.

They are a tractable people, and take as kindly to the rudiments of civilization, to work, and to co-operation with the whites as the plains Indian does to tea, tobacco, and whiskey. They are physically but not mentally inferior to the plainsman. They carve bowls and spoons of stone and bone, and their heraldic totem poles are cleverly shapen, however grotesque they may be. They still make them, but they oftener carve little ones for white people, just as they make more silver bracelets for sale than for wear. They are clever at weaving rushes and cedar bark into mats, baskets, floor-cloths, and cargo covers. In a word, they were more prone to work at the outset than most Indians, so that the present longshore career of most of them is not greatly to be wondered at.

To any one who threads the vast silent forests of the interior, or journeys upon the trafficless waterways, or, gun in hand, explores the mountains for game, the infrequency with which Indians are met becomes impressive. The province seems almost unpeopled. The reason is that the majority of the Indians were ever on the coast, where the water yielded food at all times and in plenty. The natives of the interior were not well fed or prosperous when the first white men found them, and since then small-pox, measles, vice, and starvation have thinned them terribly. Their graveyards are a feature of the scenery which all travellers in the province remember. From the railroad they may be seen along the Fraser, each grave

apparently having a shed built over it, and a cross rising from the earth beneath the shed. They had various burial customs, but a majority buried their dead in this way, with queerly carved or painted sticks above them, where the cross now testifies to the work at the "missions." Some Indians marked a man's burial place with his canoe and his gun; some still box their dead and leave the boxes on top of the earth, while others bury the boxes. Among the southern tribes a man's horse was often killed, and its skin decked the man's grave; while in the far north it was the custom among the Stickeen to slaughter the personal attendants of a chief when he died. The Indians along the Skeena River cremated their dead, and sometimes hung the ashes in boxes to the family totem pole. The Hydahs, the fierce natives of certain of the islands, have given up cremation, but they used to believe that if they did not burn a man's body their enemies would make charms from it. Polygamy flourished on the coast, and monogamy in the interior, but the contrast was due to the difference in the worldly wealth of the Indians. Wives had to be bought and fed, and the woodsmen could only afford one apiece.

To return to their canoes, which most distinguish them. When a dugout is hollowed and steamed, a prow and stern are added of separate wood. The prow is always a work of art, and greatly beautifies the boat. It is in form like the breast, neck, and bill of a bird, but the head is intended to represent that of a savage animal, and is so painted. A mouth is cut into it, ears are carved on it, and eyes are painted on the sides; bands of gay paint are put upon the neck, and the whole exterior of the boat is then painted red or black, with an ornamental line of another color along the edge or gunwale. The sailors sit upon the bottom of the boat, and propel it with paddles. Upon the water these swift vessels, with their fierce heads uplifted before their long slender bodies, appear like great serpents or nondescript marine monsters, yet they are pretty and graceful withal. While still holding aloof from the ethnologists' contention, I yet may add that a bookseller in Victoria came into the possession of a packet of photographs taken by an amateur traveller in the interior of China, and on my first visit to the province, near-

ly four years ago, I found, in looking through these views, several Chinese boats which were strangely and remarkably like the dugouts of the provincial Indians. They were too small in the pictures for it to be possible to decide whether they were built up or dug out, but in general they were of the same external appearance, and each one bore the upraised animal-head prow, shaped and painted like those I could see one block away from the bookseller's shop in Victoria. But such are not the canoes used by the Indians of the interior. From the Kootenay near our border to the Cassiar in the far north, a cigar-shaped canoe seems to be the general native vehicle. These are sometimes made of a sort of scroll of bark, and sometimes they are dugouts made of cottonwood logs. They are narrower than either the cedar dugouts of the coast or the birch-bark canoes of our Indians, but they are roomy, and fit for the most dangerous and deft work in threading the rapids which everywhere cut up the navigation of the streams of the province into separated reaches. The Rev. Dr. Gordon, in his notes upon a journey in this province, likens these canoes to horse-troughs, but those I saw in the Kootenay country were of the shape of those cigars that are pointed at both ends.

Whether these canoes are like any in Tartary or China or Japan, I do not know. My only quest for special information of that character proved disappointing. One man in a city of British Columbia is said to have studied such matters more deeply and to more purpose than all the others, but those who referred me to him cautioned me that he was eccentric.

"You don't know where these Indians came from, eh?" the *savant* replied to my first question. "Do you know how oyster-shells got on top of the Rocky Mountains? You don't, eh? Well, I know a woman who went to a dentist's yesterday to have eighteen teeth pulled. Do you know why women prefer artificial teeth to those which God has given them? You don't, eh? Why, man, you don't know anything."

While we were—or he was—conversing, a laboring-man who carried a sickle came to the open door, and was asked what he wanted.

"I wish to cut your thistles, sir," said he.

"Thistles?" said the *savant*, disturbed

at the interruption. "— the thistles! We are talking about Indians."

Nevertheless, when the laborer had gone, he had left the subject of thistles uppermost in the *savant's* mind, and the conversation took so erratic a turn that it might well have been introduced haphazard into *Tristram Shandy*.

"About thistles," said the *savant*, laying a gentle hand upon my knee. "Do you know that they are the Scotchmen's totems? Many years ago a Scotchman, sundered from his native land, must needs set up his totem, a thistle, here in this country; and now, sir, the thistle is such a curse that I am haled up twice a year and fined for having them in my yard."

But nearly enough has been here said of the native population. Though the Indians boast dozens of tribal names, and almost every island on the coast and village in the interior seems the home of a separate tribe, they will be found much alike—dirty, greasy, sore-eyed, short-legged, and with their unkempt hair cut squarely off, as if a pot had been upturned over it to guide the operation. The British Columbians do not bother about their tribal divisions, but use the old traders' Chinook terms, and call every male a "siwash" and every woman a "klootchman."

Since the highest Canadian authority upon the subject predicts that the northern half of the Cordilleran ranges will admit of as high a metalliferous development as that of the southern half in our Pacific States, it is important to review what has been done in mining, and what is thought of the future of that industry in the province. It may almost be said that the history of gold-mining there is the history of British Columbia. Victoria, the capital, was a Hudson Bay post established in 1843, and Vancouver, Queen Charlotte's, and the other islands, as well as the mainland, were of interest to only a few white men as parts of a great fur-trading field with a small Indian population. The first nugget of gold was found at what is now called Gold Harbor, on the west coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands, by an Indian woman, in 1851. A part of it, weighing four or five ounces, was taken by the Indians to Fort Simpson and sold. The Hudson Bay Company, which has done a little in every line of business in its day, sent a brigantine to

the spot, and found a quartz vein traceable eighty feet, and yielding a high percentage of gold. Blasting was begun, and the vessel was loaded with ore; but she was lost on the return voyage. An American vessel, ashore at Esquimaux, near Victoria, was purchased, renamed the *Recovery*, and sent to Gold Harbor with thirty miners, who worked the vein until the vessel was loaded and sent to England. News of the mine travelled, and in another year a small fleet of vessels came up from San Francisco; but the supply was seen to be very limited, and after \$20,000 in all had been taken out, the field was abandoned.

In 1855 gold was found by a Hudson Bay Company's employé at Fort Colville, now in Washington State, near the boundary. Some Thompson River (B. C.) Indians who went to Walla Walla spread a report there that gold, like that discovered at Colville, was to be found in the valley of the Thompson. A party of Canadians and half-breeds went to the region referred to, and found placers nine miles above the mouth of the river. By 1858 the news and the authentication of it stirred the miners of California, and an astonishing invasion of the virgin province began. It is said that in the spring of 1858 more than 20,000 persons reached Victoria from San Francisco by sea, distending the little fur-trading post of a few hundred inhabitants into what would even now be called a considerable city; a city of canvas, however. Simultaneously a third as many miners made their way to the new province on land. But the land was covered with mountains and dense forests, the only route to its interior for them was the violent, almost boiling, Fraser River, and there was nothing on which the lives of this horde of men could be sustained. By the end of the year out of nearly 30,000 adventurers only a tenth part remained. Those who did stay worked the river bars of the lower Fraser until in five months they had shipped from Victoria more than half a million dollars' worth of gold. From a historical point of view it is a peculiar coincidence that in 1859, when the attention of the world was thus first attracted to this new country, the charter of the Hudson Bay Company expired, and the territory passed from its control to become like any other crown colony.

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source of the "flour" gold they found in such abundance in the bed of the river, pursued their search into the heart and almost the centre of that forbidding and unbroken territory. The Quesnel River became the seat of their operations. Two years later came another extraordinary immigration. This was not surprising, for 1500 miners had in one year (1861) taken out \$2,000,000 in gold-dust from certain creeks in what is called the Cariboo District, and one can imagine (if one does not remember) what fabulous tales were based upon this fact. The second stampede was of persons from all over the world, but chiefly from England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. After that there were new "finds" almost every year, and the miners worked gradually northward until, about 1874, they had travelled through the province, in at one end and out at the other, and were working the tributaries of the Yukon River in the north, beyond the 60th parallel. Mr. Dawson estimates that the total yield of gold between 1858 and 1888 was \$54,108,804; the average number of miners employed each year was 2775, and the average earnings per man per year were \$622.

In his report, published by order of Parliament, Mr. Dawson says that while gold is so generally distributed over the province that scarcely a stream of any importance fails to show at least "colors" of the metal, the principal discoveries clearly indicate that the most important mining districts are in the systems of mountains and high plateaus lying to the southwest of the Rocky Mountains and parallel in direction with them.

This mountain system next to and southwest of the Rockies is called, for convenience, the Gold Range, but it comprises a complex belt "of several more or less distinct and partly overlapping ranges"—the Purcell, Selkirk, and Columbia ranges



THE FIRST OF THE SALMON RUN, FRASER RIVER.

in the south, and in the north the Cariboo, Omenica, and Cassiar ranges. "This series or system constitutes the most important metalliferous belt of the province. The richest gold fields are closely related to it, and discoveries of metalliferous lodes are reported in abundance from all parts of it which have been explored. The deposits already made known are very varied in character, including highly argentiferous galenas and other silver ores and auriferous quartz veins." This same authority asserts that the Gold Range is continued by the Cabinet, Cœur d'Alene, and Bitter Root mountains in our country. While there is no single well-developed gold field as in California, the extent of territory of a character to occasion a hopeful search for gold is greater in the province than in California. The average man of business to whom visitors speak of the mining prospects of the province is apt

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to declare that all that has been lacking is the discovery of one grand mine and the enlistment of capital (from the United States, they generally say) to work it. Mr. Dawson speaks to the same point, and incidentally accounts for the retarded development in his statement that one noteworthy difference between practically the entire area of the province and that of the Pacific States has been occasioned by the spread and movement of ice over the province during the glacial period. This produced changes in the distribution of surface materials and directions of drainage, concealed beneath "drifts" the indications to which prospectors farther south are used to trust, and by other means obscured the outcrops of veins which would otherwise be well marked. The dense woods, the broken navigation of the rivers, in detached reaches, the distance from the coast of the richest districts, and the cost of labor supplies and machinery—all these are additional and weighty reasons for the slowness of development. But this was true of the past and is not of the present, at least so far as southern British Columbia is concerned. Railroads are reaching up into it from our country and down from the transcontinental Canadian Railway, and capital, both Canadian and American, is rapidly swelling an already heavy investment in many new and promising mines. Here it is silver-mining that is achieving importance.

Other ores are found in the province. The iron which has been located or worked is principally on the islands—Queen Charlotte, Vancouver, Texada, and the Walker group. Most of the ores are magnetites, and that which alone has been worked—on Texada Island—is of excellent quality. The output of copper from the province is likely soon to become considerable. Masses of it have been found from time to time in various parts of the province—in the Vancouver series of islands, on the mainland coast, and in the interior. Its constant and rich association with silver shows lead to be abundant in the country, but it needs the development of transport facilities to give it value. Platinum is more likely to attain importance as a product in this than in any other part of North America. On the coast the granites are of such quality and occur in such abundance as to lead to the belief that their quarrying will one day be an important source of income, and

there are marbles, sandstones, and ornamental stones of which the same may be said.

One of the most valuable products of the province is coal, the essential in which our Pacific coast States are the poorest. The white man's attention was first attracted to this coal in 1835 by some Indians who brought lumps of it from Vancouver Island to the Hudson Bay post on the mainland, at Milbank Sound. The *Beaver*, the first steamship that stirred the waters of the Pacific, reached the province in 1836, and used coal that was found in outcroppings on the island beach. Thirteen years later the great trading company brought out a Scotch coal-miner to look into the character and extent of the coal find, and he was followed by other miners and the necessary apparatus for prosecuting the inquiry. In the mean time the present chief source of supply at Nanaimo, seventy miles from Victoria and about opposite Vancouver, was discovered, and in 1852 mining was begun in earnest. From the very outset the chief market for the coal was found to be San Francisco.

The original mines are now owned by the Vancouver Coal-mining and Land Company. Near them are the Wellington Mines, which began to be worked in 1871. Both have continued in active operation from their foundation, and with a constantly and rapidly growing output. A third source of supply has very recently been established with local and American capital in what is called the Comox District, back of Baynes Sound, farther north than Nanaimo, on the eastern side of Vancouver Island. These new works are called the Union Mines, and, if the predictions of my informants prove true, will produce an output equal to that of the older Nanaimo collieries combined. In 1884 the coal shipped from Nanaimo amounted to 1000 tons for every day of the year, and in 1889 the total shipment had reached 500,000 tons. As to the character of the coal, I quote again from Mr. Dawson's report on the minerals of British Columbia, published by the Dominion government:

"Rocks of cretaceous age are developed over a considerable area in British Columbia, often in very great thickness, and fuels occur in them in important quantity in at least two

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distinct stages, of which the lower and older includes the coal measures of the Queen Charlotte Islands and those of Quatsino Sound on Vancouver Island, with those of Crow Nest Pass in the Rocky Mountains; the upper, the coal measures of Nanaimo and Comox, and probably also those of Suquamish and other localities. The lower rocks hold both anthracite and bituminous coal in the Queen Charlotte Islands, but elsewhere contain bituminous coal only. The upper have so far been found to yield bituminous coal only. The fuels of the tertiary rocks are, generally speaking, lignites, but include also various fuels intermediate between these and true coals, which in a few places become true bituminous coals."

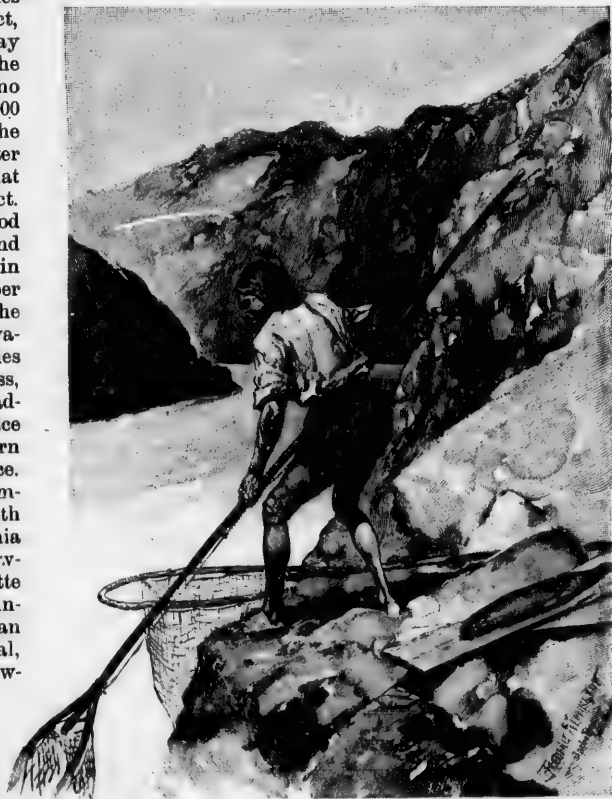
It is thought to be more than likely that the Comox District may prove far more productive than the Nanaimo region. It is estimated that productive measures underlie at least 300 square miles in the Comox District, exclusive of what may extend beyond the shore. The Nanaimo area is estimated at 200 square miles, and the product is no better than, if it equals, that of the Comox District.

Specimens of good coal have been found on the mainland in the region of the upper Skeena River, on the British Columbia watershed of the Rockies near Crow Nest Pass, and in the country adjacent to the Peace River in the eastern part of the province. Anthracite which compares favorably with that of Pennsylvania has been found at Cowitz, Queen Charlotte Islands. In 1871 a mining company began work upon this coal, but abandoned it, owing to difficulties that were encountered. It is now believed that these miners did not prove the product to be of an

unprofitable character, and that farther exploration is fully justified by what is known of the field. Of inferior forms of coal there is every indication of an abundance on the mainland of the province.

"The tertiary or Laramie coal measures of Puget Sound and Bellingham Bay" (in the United States) "are continuous north of the international boundary, and must underlie nearly 18,000 square miles of the low country about the estuary of the Fraser and in the lower part of its valley." It is quite possible, since the better coals of Nanaimo and Comox are in demand in the San Francisco market, even at their high price and with the duty added, that these lignite fields may be worked for local consumption.

Already the value of the fish caught in the British Columbian waters is estimated



INDIAN SALMON-FISHING IN THE THRASHER.

at five million dollars a year, and yet the industry is rather at its birth than in its infancy. All the waters in and near the province fairly swarm with fish. The rivers teem with them, the straits and fiords and gulfs abound with them, the ocean beyond is freighted with an incalculable weight of living food, which must soon be distributed among the homes of the civilized world. The principal varieties of fish are the salmon, cod, shad, whitefish, bass, flounder, skate, sole, halibut, sturgeon, oolachan, herring, trout, haddock, smelts, anchovies, dog-fish, perch, sardines, oysters, crayfish, shrimps, crabs, and mussels. Of other denizens of the water, the whale, sea-otter, and seal prove rich prey for those who search for them.

The main salmon rivers are the Fraser, Skeena, and Nasse rivers, but the fish also swarm in the inlets into which smaller streams empty. The Nimkish, on Vancouver Island, is also a salmon stream. Setting aside the stories of water so thick with salmon that a man might walk upon their backs, as well as that tale of the stage-coach which was upset by salmon banking themselves against it when it was crossing a fording-place, there still exist absolutely trustworthy accounts of swarms which at their height cause the largest rivers to seem alive with these fish. In such cases the ripple of their back fins frets the entire surface of the stream. I have seen photographs that show the fish in incredible numbers, side by side, like logs in a raft, and I have the word of a responsible man for the statement that he has gotten all the salmon needed for a small camp, day after day, by walking to the edge of a river and jerking the fish out with a common poker.

There are about sixteen canneries on the Fraser, six on the Skeena, three on the Nasse, and three scattered in other waters—River Inlet and Alert Bay. The total canning in 1889 was 414,294 cases, each of 48 one-pound tins. The fish are sold to Europe, Australia, and eastern Canada. The American market takes the Columbia River salmon. A round million of dollars is invested in the vessels, nets, trawls, canneries, oil factories, and freezing and salting stations used in this industry in British Columbia, and about 5500 men are employed. "There is no difficulty in catching the fish," says a local historian, "for in some streams

they are so crowded that they can readily be picked out of the water by hand." However, gill-nets are found to be preferable, and the fish are caught in these, which are stretched across the streams, and handled by men in flat-bottomed boats. The fish are loaded into scows and transported to the canneries, usually frame structures built upon piles close to the shores of the rivers. In the canneries the tins are made, and, as a rule, saw-mills near by produce the wood for the manufacture of the packing-cases. The fish are cleaned, rid of their heads and tails, and then chopped up and loaded into the tins by Chinamen and Indian women. The tins are then boiled, soldered, tested, packed, and shipped away. The industry is rapidly extending, and fresh salmon are now being shipped, frozen, to the markets of eastern America and England. My figures for 1889 (obtained from the *Victoria Times*) are in all likelihood under the mark for the season of 1890. The coast is made ragged by inlets, and into nearly every one a water-course empties. All the larger streams are the haven of salmon in the spawning season, and in time the principal ones will be the bases of canning operations.

The Dominion government has founded a salmon hatchery on the Fraser, above New Westminster. It is under the supervision of Thomas Mowat, Inspector of Fisheries, and millions of small fry are now annually turned into the great river. Whether the unexampled run of 1889 was in any part due to this process cannot be said, but certainly the salmon are not diminishing in numbers. It was feared that the refuse from the canneries would injure the "runs" of live fish, but it is now believed that there is a profit to be derived from treating the refuse for oil and guano, so that it is more likely to be saved than thrown back into the streams in the near future.

The oolachan, or candle-fish, is a valuable product of these waters, chiefly of the Fraser and Nasse rivers. They are said to be delicious when fresh, smoked, or salted, and I have it on the authority of the little pamphlet "British Columbia," handed me by a government official, that "their oil is considered superior to cod-liver oil, or any other fish oil known." It is said that this oil is whitish, and of the consistency of thin lard. It is used as food by the natives, and is an article

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THE SALMON CACHE.

of barter between the coast Indians and the tribes of the interior. There is so much of it in a candle-fish of ordinary size that when one of them is dried, it will burn like a candle. It is the custom of the natives on the coast to catch the fish in immense numbers in purse-nets. They then boil them in iron-bottomed bins, straining the product in willow baskets, and running the oil into cedar boxes holding fifteen gallons each. The Nasse River candle-fish are the best. They begin running in March, and continue to come by the million for a period of several weeks.

Codfish are supposed to be very plentiful, and to frequent extensive banks at sea, but these shoals have not been explored or charted by the government, and private enterprise will not attempt the

work. Similar banks off the Alaska coast are already the resorts of California fishermen, who drive a prosperous trade in salting large catches there. The skil, or black cod, formerly known as the "coal-fish," is a splendid deep-water product. These cod weigh from eight to twenty pounds, and used to be caught by the Indians with hook and line. Already white men are driving the Indians out by superior methods. Trawls of three hundred hooks are used, and the fish are found to be plentiful, especially off the west coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. The fish is described as superior to the cod of Newfoundland in both oil and meat. The general market is not yet accustomed to it, but such a ready sale is found for what are caught that the num-

ber of vessels engaged in this fishing increases year by year. It is evident that the catch of skil will soon be an important source of revenue to the province.

Herring are said to be plentiful, but no fleet is yet fitted out for them. Halibut are numerous and common. They are often of very great size. Sturgeon are found in the Fraser, whither they chase the salmon. One weighing 1400 pounds was exhibited in Victoria a few years ago, and those that weigh more than half as much are not unfrequently captured. The following is a report of the yield and value of the fisheries of the province for 1889:

Kind of Fish.	Quantity.	Value.
Salmon in cans.....lbs.	20,122,128	\$2,414,655 86
" fresh.....lbs.	2,187,000	218,700 00
" salted.....bbis.	3,749	87,490 00
" smoked.....lbs.	12,900	2,580 00
Sturgeon, fresh.....	318,600	15,930 00
Halibut, ".....	605,050	80,132 50
Herring, ".....	190,000	9,500 00
" smoked.....	35,000	3,300 00
Oolachans.....	82,500	8,250 00
" fresh.....	6,700	1,340 00
" salted.....bbis.	380	3,900 00
Trout, fresh.....	14,025	1,402 50
Fish, assorted.....	322,725	16,136 25
Smelts, fresh.....	52,100	3,126 00
Rock cod.....	39,230	1,961 50
Skil, salted.....bbis.	1,560	18,720 00
Foosshqua, fresh.....	268,350	13,417 50
Fur seal-skins.....No.	33,570	335,700 00
Hair.....	7,000	5,250 00
Sea-otter skins.....	115	11,500 00
Fish oil.....gals.	141,430	70,710 00
Oysters.....sacks	3,000	5,250 00
Clams.....	8,500	6,125 00
Mussels.....	250	500 00
Crabs.....No.	175,000	5,250 00
Abelones.....boxes	100	500 00
Isinglass.....lbs.	5,000	1,750 00
Estimated fish consumed in province.....		100,000 00
Shrimps, prawns, etc.....		5,000 00
Estimated consumption by Indians—		
Salmon.....		2,732,500 00
Halibut.....		190,000 00
Sturgeon and other fish.....		260,000 00
Fish oils.....		75,000 00
Approximate yield.....		\$6,005,487 61

When it is considered that this is the showing of one of the newest communities on the continent, numbering only the population of what we would call a small city, suffering for want of capital and nearly all that capital brings with it, there is no longer occasion for surprise at the provincial boast that they possess far more extensive and richer fishing-fields than any on the Atlantic coast. Time and enterprise will surely test this assertion, but it is already evident that there is a vast revenue to be wrested from those waters.

I have not spoken of the sealing, which yielded \$236,000 in 1887, and may yet be decided to be exclusively an American

and not a British Columbian source of profit. Nor have I touched upon the extraction of oil from herrings and from dog-fish and whales, all of which are small channels of revenue.

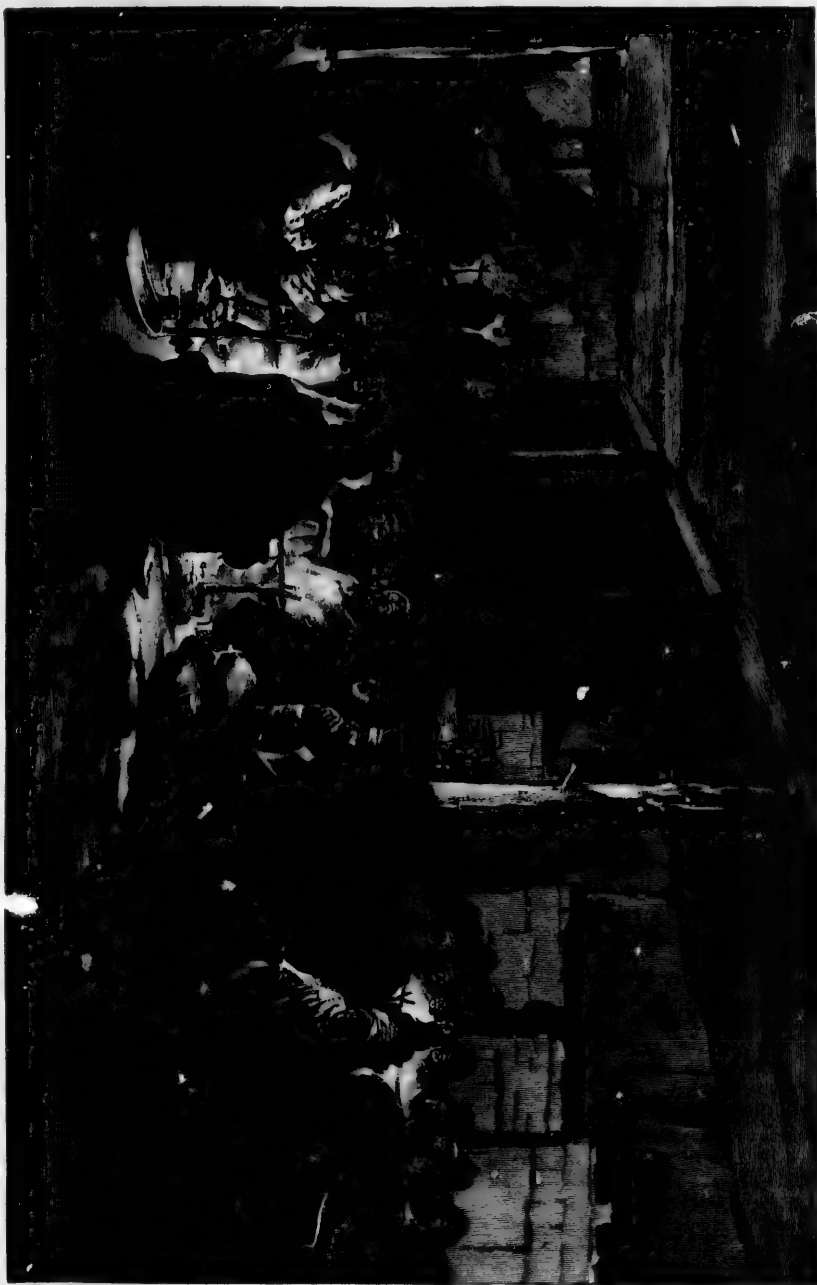
I enjoyed the good fortune to talk at length with a civil engineer of high repute who has explored the greater part of southern British Columbia—at least in so far as its main valleys, waterways, trails, and mountain passes are concerned. Having learned not to place too high a value upon the printed matter put forth in praise of any new country, I was especially pleased to obtain this man's practical impressions concerning the store and quality and kinds of timber the province contains. He said, not to use his own words, that timber is found all the way back from the coast to the Rockies, but it is in its most plentiful and majestic forms on the west slope of those mountains and on the west slope of the Coast Range. The very largest trees are between the Coast Range and the coast. The country between the Rocky Mountains and the Coast Range is dry by comparison with the parts where the timber thrives best, and, naturally, the forests are inferior. Between the Rockies and the Kootenay River cedar and tamaracks reach six and eight feet in diameter, and attain a height of 200 feet not infrequently. There are two or three kinds of fir and some pines (though not very many) in this region. There is very little leaf wood, and no hard-wood. Maples are found, to be sure, but they are rather more like bushes than trees to the British Columbian mind. As one moves westward the same timber prevails, but it grows shorter and smaller until the low coast country is reached. There, as has been said, the giant forests occur again. This coast region is largely a flat country, but there are not many miles of it.

To this rule, as here laid down, there are some notable exceptions. One particular tree, called there the bull-pine—it is the pine of Lake Superior and the East—grows to great size all over the province. It is a common thing to find the trunks of these trees measuring four feet in diameter, or nearly thirteen feet in circumference. It is not especially valuable for timber, because it is too sappy. It is short-lived when exposed to the weather, and is therefore not in demand for railroad work; but for the ordinary

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THE POLLAATCH



uses to which builders put timber it answers very well.

There is a maple which attains great size at the coast, and which, when dressed, closely resembles bird's-eye-maple. It is called locally the vine-maple. The trees are found with a diameter of two and a half to three feet, but the trunks seldom rise above forty or fifty feet. The wood is crooked. It runs very badly. This, of course, is what gives it the beautiful grain it possesses, and which must, sooner or later, find a ready market for it. There is plenty of hemlock in the province, but it is nothing like so large as that which is found in the East, and its bark is not so thick. Its size renders it serviceable for nothing larger than railway ties, and the trees grow in such inaccessible places, half-way up the mountains, that it is for the most part unprofitable to handle it. The red cedars—the wood of which is consumed in the manufacture of pencils and cigar-boxes—are also small. On the other hand, the white cedar reaches enormous sizes, up to fifteen feet of thickness at the base, very often. It is not at all extraordinary to find these cedars reaching 200 feet above the ground, and one was cut at Port Moody, in clearing the way for the railroad, that had a length of 310 feet. When fire rages in the provincial forests, the wood of these trees is what is consumed, and usually the trunks, hollow and empty, stand grimly in their places after the fire would otherwise have been forgotten. These great tubes are often of such dimensions that men put windows and doors in them and use them for dwellings. In the valleys are immense numbers of poplars of the common and cottonwood species, white birch, alder, willow, and yew trees, but they are not estimated in the forest wealth of the province, because of the expense that marketing them would entail.

This fact concerning the small timber indicates at once the primitive character of the country, and the vast wealth it possesses in what might be called heroic timber, that is, sufficiently valuable to force its way to market even from out that unopened wilderness. It was the opinion of the engineer to whom I have referred that timber land which does not attract the second glance of a prospector in British Columbia would be considered of the first importance in Maine and New Brunswick. To put it in another way, river-

side timber land which in those countries would fetch fifty dollars the acre solely for its wood, in British Columbia would not be taken up. In time it may be cut, undoubtedly it must be, when new railroads alter its value, and therefore it is impossible even roughly to estimate the value of the provincial forests.

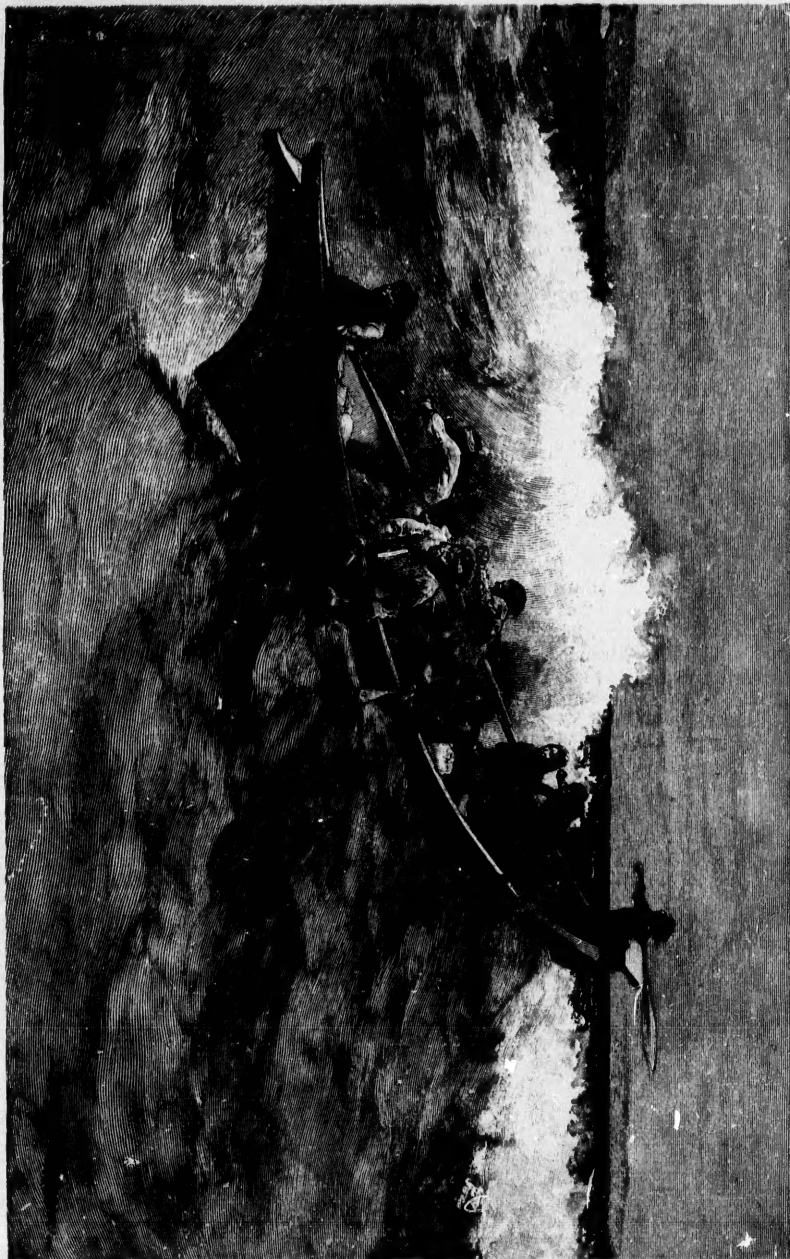
A great business is carried on in the shipment of ninety-foot and one-hundred-foot Douglas fir sticks to the great car-building works of our country and Canada. They are used in the massive bottom frames of palace cars. The only limit that has yet been reached in this industry is not in the size of the logs, but in the capacities of the saw-mills, and in the possibilities of transportation by rail, for these logs require three cars to support their length. Except for the valleys, the whole vast country is enormously rich in this timber, the mountains (excepting the Rockies) being clothed with it from their bases to their tops. Vancouver Island is a heavily and valuably timbered country. It bears the same trees as the mainland, except that it has the oak-tree, and does not possess the tamarack. The Vancouver Island oaks do not exceed two or two and a half feet in diameter. The Douglas fir (our Oregon pine) grows to tremendous proportions, especially on the north end of the island. In the old offices of the Canadian Pacific Railway at Vancouver are panels of this wood that are thirteen feet across, showing that they came from a tree whose trunk was forty feet in circumference. Tens of thousands of these firs are from eight to ten feet in diameter at the bottom.

Other trees of the province are the great silver fir, the wood of which is not very valuable; Englemann's spruce, which is very like white spruce, and is very abundant; balsam-spruce, often exceeding two feet in diameter; the yellow or pitch pine; white pine; yellow cypress; crab-apple, occurring as a small tree or shrub; Western birch, common in the Columbia region; paper or canoe birch, found sparingly on Vancouver Island and on the lower Fraser, but in abundance and of large size in the Peace River and upper Fraser regions; dogwood; arbutus; and several minor trees. Among the shrubs which grow in abundance in various districts or all over the province are the following: hazel, red elder, willow, barberry, wild red cherry, blackberry, yellow plum, choke-cherry, raspberry, gooseberry, bearberry, cur-

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GOING TO THE POTLATCH—BIG CANOE, NORTHWEST COAST.



rant, and snowberry, mooseberry, bilberry, cranberry, whortleberry, mulberry, and blueberry.

I would have liked to write at length concerning the enterprising cities of the province, but, after all, they may be trusted to make themselves known. It is the region behind them which most interests mankind, and the government has begun, none too promptly, a series of expeditions for exploiting it. As for the cities, the chief among them and the capital, Victoria, has an estimated population of 22,000. Its business district wears a prosperous, solid, and attractive appearance, and its detached dwellings—all of frame, and of the distinctive type which marks the houses of the California towns—are surrounded by gardens. It has a beautiful but inadequate harbor; yet in a few years it will have spread to Esquimault, now less than two miles distant. This is now the seat of a British admiralty station, and has a splendid haven, whose water is of a depth of from six to eight fathoms. At Esquimault are government offices, churches, schools, hotels, stores, a naval "canteen," and a dry-dock 450 feet long, 26 feet deep, and 65 feet wide at its entrance. The electric street railroad of Victoria was extended to Esquimault in the autumn of 1890. Of the climate of Victoria Lord Lorne said, "It is softer and more constant than that of the south of England."

Vancouver, the principal city of the mainland, is slightly smaller than Victoria, but did not begin to displace the forest until 1886. After that every house except one was destroyed by fire. To-day it boasts a hotel comparable in most important respects with any in Canada, many noble business buildings of brick or

stone, good schools, fine churches, a really great area of streets built up with dwellings, and a notable system of wharves, warehouses, etc. The Canadian Pacific Railway terminates here, and so does the line of steamers for China and Japan. The city is picturesquely and healthfully situated on an arm of Burrard Inlet, has gas, water, electric lights, and shows no sign of halting its hitherto rapid growth. Of New Westminster, Nanaimo, Yale, and the still smaller towns, there is not opportunity here for more than naming.

In the original settlements in that territory a peculiar institution occasioned gala times for the red men now and then. This was the "potlatch," a thing to us so foreign, even in the impulse of which it is begotten, that we have no word or phrase to give its meaning. It is a feast and merrymaking at the expense of some man who has earned or saved what he deems considerable wealth, and who desires to distribute every iota of it at once in edibles and drinkables among the people of his tribe or village. He does this because he aspires to a chieftainship, or merely for the credit of a "potlatch"—a high distinction. Indians have been known to throw away such a sum of money that their "potlatch" has been given in a huge shed built for the feast, that hundreds have been both fed and made drunk, and that blankets and ornaments have been distributed in addition to the feast.

The custom has a new significance now. It is the white man who is to enjoy a greater than all previous potlatches in that region. The treasure has been garnered during the ages by time or nature or whatsoever you may call the host, and the province itself is offered as the feast.



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